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ELECTRICAL AND COMMUNICATION UTILITY SYSTEMS REGULATION

INFORMATION BULLETIN

NOVEMBER, 1990

The logo for the province of Alberta, featuring a stylized 'A' that incorporates a mountain range and the word 'Alberta' in a bold, sans-serif font.

LABOUR

Electrical Protection Branch

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Issue #001

PREFACE

The publication of this information bulletin has been inaugurated as a service to the Utility industry. It's purpose is to keep the Utility industry informed of decisions, interpretations and policies that effect the safety of workers and installations in the application of the Electrical and Communication Utility System Regulation. Information Bulletins will be published periodically by the Electrical Protection Branch as need arises and will be distributed to employees by the Utility Companies in Alberta.

Editorial corrections in the ECUSR

The following editorial errors have been noted in the ECUSR, please make the necessary changes in your copy.

Section 413(3); change "not" to "hot" in last line

Section 424(1); change "outline" to "outlined"

Section 424(1)(2)(3); change Table 41 to Table 6-1

Section 478 and 479; marginal notes have been reversed

Table 5-27 NOTE (1); change "commended" to "recommended"

Table 5-29 1st column; change "0.5" to "0 to .5"

Section 356.2(7)

A special meeting was held in June, 1990 with the Transportation and Utilities Department, Nova, CWNG, Northwest Utilities and the EPB to review the intent, application and concerns of Section 356.2(7) which relates to power lines over natural gas distribution and metering facilities. Subsection (7) makes an exception to the regulation which prohibits power lines over hazardous areas.

It was agreed that there are situations, particularly in urban locations, where power distribution lines and gas distribution facilities are located in close proximity. The development of rural gas co-ops resulted in gas facilities being located along road allowances in conjunction with power lines. To date, there have not been any reported incidences where these situations have created a hazard. However, the potential exists for a powerline to fall onto the gas installation and create, not only an explosive and fire hazard, but an interruption of power and gas services.

It was agreed that there is an element of risk involved when a power line passes over a gas facility even when the conditions outlined in the regulations are complied with. Therefore, those responsible for planning gas installations and routes for transmission and distribution lines shall avoid conflicts between the two systems.

Section 363.1 and Reference Table 5-32

A meeting was held in May, 1990 with Utility Company representatives, Transportation and Utilities Department and the EPB to review the regulations relating to the set back of poles from roadways. It was determined that the setback distances in Table 5-32 were suitable for breakerway type poles only as set out in the Road and Transportation Association of Canada (RTAC) Standard. This Standard is used by Department of Transportation and Utilities and municipalities.

It was also determined that municipal authorities govern the location of lighting standards and power lines in their jurisdiction and that right-of-ways for roads may not allow for the provisions of the regulations to be met.

It was decided to delete this regulation in the next publication and to not enforce this regulation in the interim. It is still the responsibility of Utility companies to have the location of power lines and street lighting approved by the municipality involved or the Transportation and Utilities department. This department is responsible for numbered highways and Improvement Districts. Poles and structures shall not be installed prior to receiving authorization from the authority involved.

Part VII Underground Systems

There are no sections in Part VII that deal with underground systems, manholes, transformers, etc. in hazardous areas. It was decided at the last Electrical Utility Regulation Committee meeting that where this type of installation is encountered, direction for the installation and the hazardous area boundaries shall be obtained from the Canadian Electrical Code and Oilfield Facility Regulations.

Section 10 Excavation Work In Vicinity of Underground Power Cables

There have been some questions regarding the responsibility of the Utility Company when excavations for sewer, water and similar services are being performed near underground power lines. Section 10 has been interpreted to hold the operator of the underground powerline responsible to:

- locate and mark the underground line
- assure the person doing the excavation has been properly instructed in the method of exposing the power cable
- advise of the hazards involved while the underground cable is being exposed and after it has been exposed
- advise how the cable must be protected during the operation
- advise how it must be treated during the backfilling operation

The operator of the underground power cable is responsible for assuring that excavation and exposure of cables is done safely. He must determine if direct supervision is required or if the work will be done in a safe manner without direct supervision. This will depend on the reliability of the excavator and the type of installation involved.

Electrical Wiring Permits

Electrician and homeowners in areas serviced by the EPB are now using electrical wiring permits with a new look. The permit format was developed to provide installation information to tie in with our risk management program. The new form also makes it easier to provide more accurate locations for installations.

Safety Topic

A number of accidents and "near misses" to utility workers have been reported. Most could have been prevented if the safety requirements in the Regulation had been followed. All Utility employees are reminded to make sure they are familiar with, and follow the requirements of the Utility Regulation. Part III "Safety Rules" cover the safe work practices for employers and employees. Section 68 "Installing Protective Grounds" is one of the procedures to assure worker safety. This is one that is often not complied with, resulting in death, injury or near misses.

Two Sub-committees have been established to act in an advisory capacity to the Electrical Protection Branch in administering the Utility Regulation. The parameters for these committees are:

1. To advise on the interpretation and application of the regulation.
2. To propose changes to the regulations.
3. To provide advice on specific matters when requested.
4. To liason between the industry and the administrators of the Regulation.

The Technical sub-committee will advise on technical installation matters. The Safety sub-committee will advise on safe work practices within the Utility operation. The following is a list of the committee membership.

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